

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 AMMAN 06930 150848Z

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ACTION SS-25

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O R 150659Z OCT 75 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5896
INFO AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

S E C R E T AMMAN 6930

EXDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR MASS JO US MU

SUBJ: TALK WITH KING-OMAN ARMS SALES

1. SUMMARY: KING CALLED ME EARLY EVENING OCTOBER 14 AND ASKED TO SEE ME RIGHT AWAY. TOLD ME THAT HE HAD RECEIVED ANGUISHED MESSAGE FROM SULTAN QABOOS THAT US HAS REFUSED,OR WAS DELAYING INORDINATELY (KING DID NOT KNOW WHICH) OMANI REQUEST TO PURCHASE 150 M-16 RIFLES AND QUANTITY (60 OR 70) GREANADE LAUNCHERS (M-79 OR M-203?) HE SAID THAT QABOOS HAD TOLD HIS TROOPS THESE WEAPONS WOULD BE COMING AND QUESTION WAS CAUSING HIM MILITARY MORALE PROBLEMS. HE ASKED OUR HELP IN PROVIDING AN EARLY DELIVERY AND ASKED THAT I CALL ISSUE PERSONALLY TO YOUR ATTENTION. SAID HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND HOW WE COULD GET TOW MISSILES TO OMAN QUICKLY AND FAIL TO DELIVERY ON A SMALL AND SIMPLE ARMS SALE. END SUMMARY.

2. KING SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN ASTONISHED TO HEAR FROM QABOOS, PRESUMABLY THROUGH OMANI INTERIOR MINISTER WHO WAS JUST HERE ON A VISIT, THAT US COULD NOT DELIVERY 150 RIFLES AND 60 OR 70 GRENADES LAUNCHERS TO OMAN. KING SAID AT FIRST THAT HE THOUGH WE HAD REFUSED TO MAKE THE SALE AND THAT HE BELIEVED THAT IT WAS PROBABLY LOW LEVEL BUREAUCRATIC DECISION. LATER HE ADDED THAT IT WAS NOT CLEAR TO HIM WHAT WAS INVOLVED--QUITE POSSIBLY AND INORDINATE DELAY IN MAKING THE DELIVERY.

SECRET

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PAGE 02 AMMAN 06930 150848Z

3. KING STRESSED THAT OMANI FORCES WERE NOW COUNTING ON MORE MODERN WEAPONS. MORALE WAS A SERIOUS FACTOR AND HE SYMPATHIZED WITH QABOOS IN HIS FRUSTRATION OVER THE SALE. HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY WE HAD PROVIDED TOW TO OMAN BUT COULD NOT MAKE A SIMPLE SALE OF RIFLES AND GRENADE LAUNCHERS WHICH WERE EXACTLY WHAT THE OMANIS NEEDED.

4. I TOLD KING I HAD NO INFORMATION TO OFFER BUT WOULD BE GLAD TO INQUIRE. KING SAID OMAN OF COURSE WILL PAY FOR THE RIFLES HE WOULD LOOK AT HIS OWN STOCKS OF M-16S AND GRENADE LAUNCHERS, BUT HE WAS VERY MUCH AFRAID THE LATTER, AND POSSIBLY THE FORMER WERE IN SHORT SUPPLY. KING KNOWS IN ANY EVENT THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO GET OUR PERMISSION FOR A TRANSFER SO HIS INQUIRY IS OF COURSE RELEVANT.

5. WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR ANY BACKGROUND FROM EMBASSY MUSCAT AND WASHINGTON ON THIS CASE AND WOULD OF COURSE WELCOME EMBASSY MUSCAT COMMENTS.

6. BELIEVE STRONGLY THAT, AS I PRESUME IT HAS IN PAST, ALL BUSINESS ON THIS CASE SHOULD BE HANDLED DIRECTLY WITH OMANIS. NEVERTHELESS KING HIGHLY VALUES HIS RELATIONS IN GULF AND HIS ACTIVITIES HAVE PROVED MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL. THEREFORE SUGGEST THAT WE PROVIDE HIM AT THE VERY LEAST WITH INFORMATION ON WHATEVER MIGHT HAVE OCCURRED IN THIS CASE AND ON OUR INTENTIONS.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: A TIMELY REPLY FOR THE KING ON HIS REQUEST FOR INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE TO OMAN ON THIS SALES REQUEST. PICKERING

SECRET

NNN

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